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The Fox in the Andes

An Alternative Interpretation of the Trickster

Matthias Pache

Abstract. – Since the end of the 19th century, many interpretations of the trickster's role and function have been developed. In the present article, prominent interpretations of the trickster are briefly summarized and subsequently applied to an exemplary trickster: the fox in the oral traditions of the southern Central Andes. The considered interpretations of the role and function of the trickster turn out to be somewhat problematic. For this reason the article proposes an alternative interpretation of the trickster, mainly founded on current research in cognitive anthropology. *[Southern Central Andes, Quechua, Aymara, Chipaya, trickster, Andean oral traditions, cognitive anthropology]*

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1 Introduction

The worldwide existing category of protagonists called trickster by ethnologists or literary specialists has often been described as a puzzling and above all fascinating phenomenon.[1] Ethnologists first discovered or rather constructed the concept of the "trickster" at the end of the 19th century. Protagonists which are to be classified within this category can be found in different cultures on all continents – in Africa, Polynesia, Asia, Europe, and very frequently in North America.[2] These different trickster figures show a considerable "family resemblance" (Wittgenstein 1953, cited in Sperber 1996: 17),[3] but the correspondence between this Western concept and the indigenous reality is a matter of critical debate (cf. e.g., Pelton 1993; Beidelmann 1993).

In the course of the last century, ethnologists, psychologists as well as specialists in religious and literary studies have proposed many different interpretations of the role and the (mainly social) function of tricksters. In the present article, I briefly summarize important interpretations of the trickster and discuss them with reference to a concrete example: the fox in the oral tradition of the southern Central Andes. Based on this discussion, alternative interpretations of the trickster will be developed.

1 Babcock-Abrahams (1975: 147); Hynes (1993a: 216f.); Makarius (1993: 67); Pelton (1993: 122f.).

2 Mower (2001); Doty (1993); Koepping (1984); Levy (1974); Stein (1993); Vecsey (1993); Weber und Weber 1983: 85).

3 Just to mention an example, there is a worldwide association of tricksters and nets or webs: Michabo, a trickster among the Algonquin-speaking populations of the eastern Woodlands of North America copies net fabrication from spiders and imparts this knowledge to humans (Brinton 1969 [1876]: 177). Ananse, a trickster of the Ashanti and other Akan in Ghana, is a spider (Vecsey 1993: 107). Raven, a trickster among different populations on the northwestern coast of North America teaches both the spiders and humans how to fabricate nets/webs (Hyde 1998: 18). Among the Okanagan, an indigenous population living in the present states of British Columbia and Washington, there are stories in which the Great Spirit charges coyote, the trickster, to teach the humans how to catch salmon (Hyde 1998: 22). Loki, a trickster in Scandinavian mythology, is also associated to the invention of nets and fishing for salmon (Golther 2004: 504).

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1.1 Interpretations of the Trickster

William J. Hynes (1993b), a specialist in religious studies, defines six central characteristics of tricksters, stressing the fact that not every trickster automatically shows all of them. Tricksters have an anomalous and ambiguous personality, they play tricks and deceive their environment, they have the ability to shift their shape and to invert situations. They often act as messengers of imitators of the gods and as a sacred and at the same time lewd bricoleur.[4]

1.2 The Role of the Trickster

First interpretations of North American tricksters made by Brinton (1969 [1876]) and Boas (1969 [1898]) focused on their ambiguous character, their simultaneously acting as a fool, and a culture hero. Considering Michabo, a trickster in the oral traditions of indigenous populations of the eastern Woodlands, Brinton (1969: 178 f., 186 f.) interprets this protagonist, based on etymological speculations, as a former light deity, as a degenerate culture hero that has been transformed, in the course of time, into an egotistical fool (1969: 175 f.). Boas, on the other hand, interprets the foolish-egotistical character as original trait of the trickster (1969: 11).

Other authors preferred a psychodynamic interpretation of the trickster, as Paul Radin (1954) did in his analysis of Wakdjũnkaga in the myth cycle of the Sioux-speaking Winnebago or Hochunk in the Great Lakes Region. Radin (1954: 154) interprets the trickster's adventures as a description of man's coming to consciousness. The trickster himself is, following Radin, a personification of a remote, primitive past of manhood, but also of man's present inferior traits of character (cf. also Bischof 1996: 437, 518; Jung 1954: 204).

Claude Lévi-Strauss (1958: 251), to cite another interpreter of the trickster's role, postulates that mythical thinking is thinking in oppositions and that myths have the function of transcending these oppositions. Thus, Lévi-Strauss gives the following explanation of the mediating (and as a result of this: ambiguous) character of the trickster: trickster simply embodies the myths' attempt to mediate and transcend opposites (1958: 254).

Mac L. Ricketts (1966: 336 f.; 1993: 105) understands trickster as a parody of the shaman. Man has two different possibilities to respond to the world and its mysteries: in the way of the shaman and in the way of the trickster (Ricketts 1966: 344 f.). The shaman's attitude towards the "Great Unknown" is awe. He "represents the religious experience of humility ... before Spirit" (Ricketts 1993: 87) and tries to manipulate the world in an indirect way, through the worship of supernatural beings and cooperation with them. Trickster embodies the opposite attitude towards the unknown world. He tries to submit it directly without help from others, only through his own wit, and in playing irreverent tricks (Ricketts 1966: 335–339, 344–347). Because of this opposite attitude towards the world that trickster and shaman stand for, the latter are parodied and become an object of ridicule in trickster tales (Ricketts 1966: 336–338).

The literary specialist Barbara Babcock-Abrahams (1975: 150 f., 172) relates the adventures of Wakdjũnkaga to the "rites de passage" (cf. van Gennep 1986; Turner 1969) and their tripartite structure of separation, marginality/liminality, and reaggregation. Trickster as a "marginal figure" lives "betwixt and between" all sorts of social and spatial boundaries and positions (Babcock-Abrahams 1975: 155). He embodies opposites, escapes and at the same time confuses all sorts of structure – he is "paradox personified" (148). With his ambiguous and paradoxical character, trickster

> epitomizes the paradox of the human condition and exploits the incongruity that we are creatures of the earth and yet not wholly creatures of the earth in that we have need of clothing and spiritual ideals to clothe our nakedness, of money, and of language – of human institutions. Further, he embodies the fundamental contradiction of our existence: the contradiction between the individual and society, between freedom and constraint (Babcock-Abrahams 1975: 160 f.).

In her interpretation of different trickster figures, Laura Makarius (1993: 71, 84) emphasizes the association between the transgressing and breaking of (blood) taboos and the attainment of superhuman, ambivalent, sacred, magical capabilities. In doing that, she reconciles the seeming inconsistency between the trickster as a taboo-breaking fool and as a culture hero: trickster receives magical goods and powers through the transgression of taboos "on behalf of his group, thereby obtaining the medicines or talismans necessary to satisfy its needs and desires. Thus he plays the role of founder of his society's ritual and ceremonial life" (Makarius 1993: 73), and at the same time he "take[s] upon himself the sins of humanity and set[s] humans free, by virtue of the familiar process of redemption" (83). For this reason, the trickster's behaviour is depicted as silly and stupid: he thus becomes a victim of his own tricks and "pay[s] the price of his violations" (84).

4 Cf. also Babcock-Abrahams (1975: 159 f.); Hyde (1998: 17, 185; 2001: 185); Weber und Weber (1983: 103).

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1.3 The Function of the Trickster

Different scientists have not only tried to describe the role of the trickster, but have also undertaken several attempts to explain the character of the trickster and have given several interpretations of possible functions of the trickster or rather of telling trickster tales. Some authors underline the deeply satisfying entertainment character of trickster myths[5] and postulate a social venting function (Dundes 1964: 108; Hynes 1993a: 206f.). Trickster tales are also said to serve pedagogic goals and to affirm social rules and values by breaking them and giving negative examples.[6]

Ricketts (1966: 348, 350) conceives the function of trickster myths as to impart people with the insight that man's possibilities are limited. Some of these limitations are natural, some of them are cultural. Within these boundaries, man "is to live with all his powers" (348), without taking neither life nor himself too seriously and without fearing or serving transcendent powers. Trickster gives man a "purpose for living this life. He says that this life is good, that it is to be grasped with enthusiasm and enjoyed to the hilt" (350).

Babcock-Abrahams (1975: 184f.) postulates the creation of *communitas* (cf. Turner 1969) as a central function of the performance of trickster tales. *Communitas* is a hardly structured "modality of social relatedness" (185), in which status does not have any importance and social roles are reversed, and that prevails, for example, in carnival. This marginal state, "freed from the constraints of social structural roles" (185) highly correlates with creativity and fantasy. Trickster tales hence allow it to throw doubt on all sorts of rules and to provide humans with new perspectives.

2 A Concrete Example: The Fox in the Southern Central Andes

2.1 The Southern Central Andes as a Homogenous Cultural Area

The fox tales or *cuentos*[7], considered within the framework of this article, have been recorded during a fieldwork trip from July to September 2006 in the Altiplano of the southern Central Andes, in a region between Lake Titicaca (Puno Province, Puno Department, Peru) in the north and Coipasa Lake (Atahuallpa Province, Oruro Department, Bolivia) in the south. The different indigenous groups that settle this region are all holder of a common Andean culture (cf. Gade 1999: 33–36), although there is no genetic relationship between the languages they speak: Quechua Collao, Aymara, and Chipaya (Adelaar and Muysken 2004: 167–169, 187, 259–261, 362f., 612, 619f.). Nevertheless, a great number of phenomena in these languages evidence long and intense contact between the different indigenous groups (cf. e.g., Adelaar 1987; Hannß 2008: 8–10). At present, culture and way of life of the Quechua-, Aymara-, and Chipaya-speaking populations in the southern Central Andes are extremely similar or even identical.[8] In addition, more or less identical versions of the fox tales, that are analyzed in this article, can be found in other regions of the Andes, sometimes far away.[9] The fox tales analyzed within the present article do not possess any elements that would be specific for only one of the three indigenous groups, Quechua, Aymara, or Chipaya. These points taken together, a relatively undifferentiated analysis of the presented fox tales seems justified.

2.2 Biological Sketch of the Andean Fox

The Andean Fox (*Dusicyon culpaeus*) belongs to the genus *Dusicyon*, whose main distribution lies in southern and western South America. The predominant habitat of the Andean Fox are open and rather dry areas (Gudemann 1992: 389), its colour is grey, its length is up to 115 cm, and its main activity is nocturne (Itier 1997: 315). The main prey of the

5 Hyde (1998: 188f.); Hynes (1993a: 202–206); cf. also Babcock-Abrahams (1975: 182).

6 Hyde (1998: 295); Hynes (1993a: 205, 207f.); Pelton (1993: 138); Vecsey (1993).

7 The term *cuento* will be used in this article as a synonym of "oral tradition," "myth," and "tale."

8 Cf. e.g., Gade (1999: 36–41); Garr (1972: 178); Johnsson (1986: 33); Leleu (2005: 246–258); Manga Quespi (1994: 168); Marzal (1971: 253f.); Murra (1984: 122–124); Ortiz Rescaniere (1989: 137–167); Schramm (1988: 170); Wachtel (1990: 17f., 64, 72, 112, 281f.).

Llachón, home of the Quechua-speaking storyteller ("The Fox and the Condor") is situated in an area that once was dominated by Aymara but also by Puquina- and Uru-speaking populations (Adelaar and Muysken 2004: 260; Wachtel 1990: 506–509, 512f.). Oruro, the city where the Aymara-speaking storyteller ("The Fox and the Birds") comes from, lies in proximity of a region where Quechua is spoken today (Adelaar and Muysken 2004: 260). The village of Santa Ana de Chipaya, where the Chipaya-speaking storyteller ("The Fox and the Woman") comes from, is surrounded by Aymara-speaking people (Wachtel 1990: 14).

9 Cf. e.g., Dedenbach-Salazar Sáenz (1999); Itier (1997); Osterling (1984); Payne (2000); Pino Saavedra (1982); Taylor (1996)

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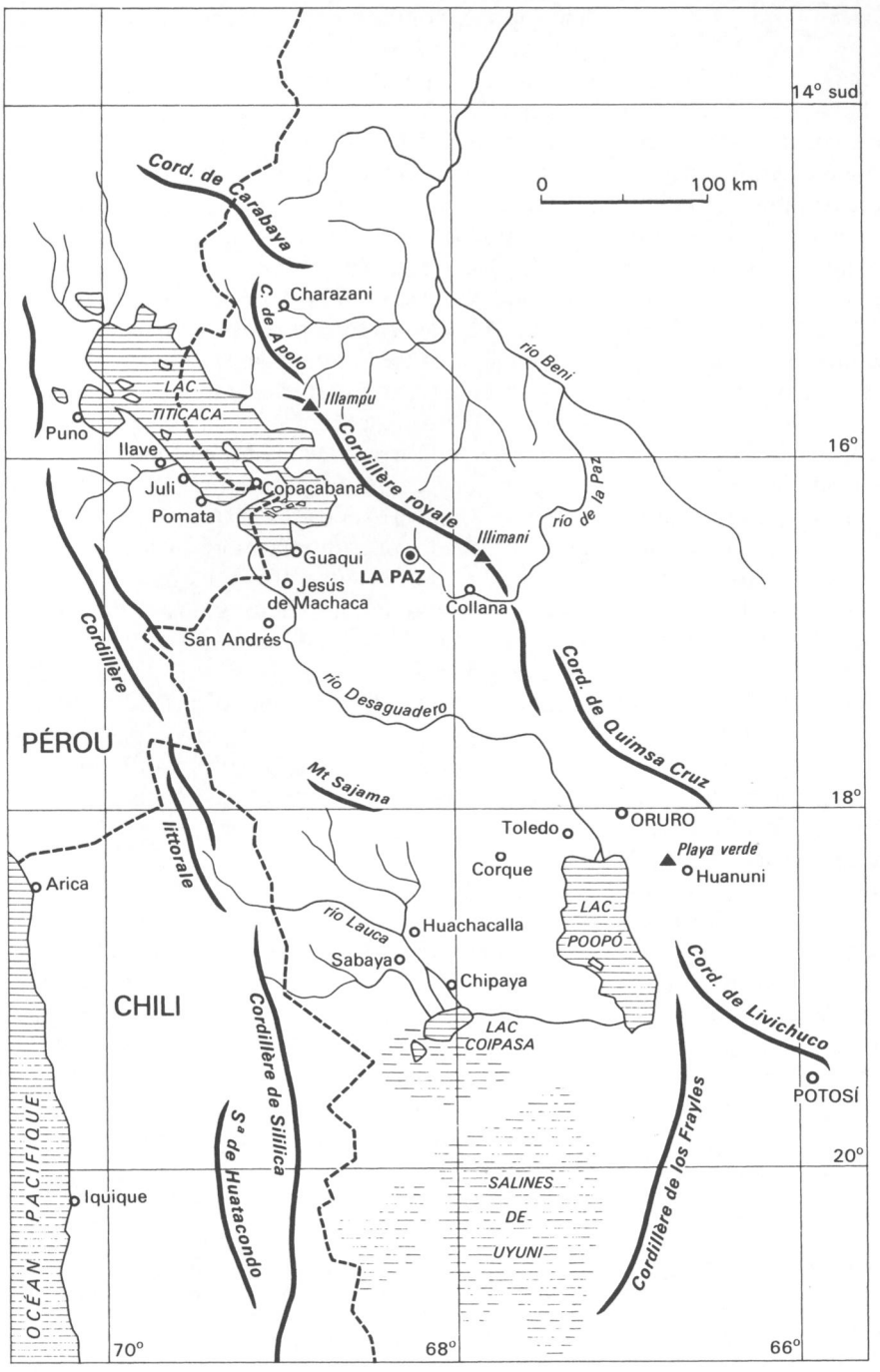

Map: The southern Central Andes (Wachtel 1990: 15).

Andean Fox are different small birds, mice (Morote Best 1988: 88) but also young llamas and lambs. To a lesser degree it also eats corn and different fruit (Itier 1997: 311 f.).

2.3 The Fox in Central Andean Culture

There is not much archaeological information about the role of the fox in the Andes before the arrival of the Spaniards (Zuidema 1985: 186). In dictionaries from colonial times the fox is inter alia associated with slyness, theft, wilderness and the uncivilized, and a certain creative power (Bertonio 2006 [1612]:

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164, 431; González Holguín 1989 [1608]: 37, 47, 421). Other sources from colonial times like "Ritos y tradiciones de Huarochirí"[10] depict the fox as worthless (Taylor 1980 [1608]: chap. 2: 35), nervous and easily startled (chap. 5: 49f.; chap. 6: 60f.) as well as knowledgeable (chap. 5: 45). In different colonial sources, the fox appears as a bringer of bad tidings,[11] as a death messenger (Guaman Poma de Ayala 1936 [ca. 1615]: 282), and as playing a certain role in agricultural contexts.[12] In precolonial times a deity in the shape of a fox was adored in Pachacamac, a sanctuary and oracle on the coast south of the present city of Lima.[13]

At present the fox seems to be associated in the southern Central Andes with the following aspects:[14] wilderness,[15] slyness and skill,[16] ruse and deception (Morote Best 1988: 88), with the underworld,[17] with the transition to adulthood (Urton 1985: 259–270), with theft (Chirinos Rivera y Maque Capira 1996: 196–198; Morote Best 1988: 88), and the ability to foresee the future in different contexts.[18] As a protagonist of the *cuentos*, the fox is also associated with a certain stupidity:[19] "Es un animal tonto para nosotros. Inteligente, pero tonto ... al mismo tiempo. Sería mejor decirlo 'tonto vivo'."[20] The fox as a protagonist of oral traditions is clever and stupid at the same time.[21] Being a skillful cattle thief (Chirinos Rivera y Maque Capira 1996: 196–198), the fox is killed with poison[22] or with traps[23] in some regions. In other regions, however, the fox is respected and feared (Itier 1997: 312) and is regarded as a legate of the *pachatierra*, maintaining the reciprocal relationship between humans and the earth by taking cattle, and, thereby, guaranteeing the farmers' prosperity.[24] The fox plays also an important role in agricultural contexts, foreseeing, for example, the richness of the harvest (Chirinos Rivera y Maque Capira 1996: 194; Urton 1985: 261). His entire tail or its tip helps men, as a talisman, in giving a speech, in seducing women,[25] and in carrying out transactions[26] – the person thereby attains the ruse and skillfulness attributed to the fox (cf. also Morote Best 1988: 87).

10 The manuscript edited under this title was probably part of the documents belonging to the clergyman Francisco de Avila and was used by him to fight the religion of the indigenous population in Huarochirí, near Lima (Dedenbach-Salazar Sáenz 2003: 4f.).

11 Betánzos (1968 [1551]: chap. 17: 52f.); Cobo (1956 [1653]: chap. 45: 359); Taylor (1980: chap. 2: 35).

12 Arriaga (1999 [1621]: 44); Guaman Poma de Ayala (1936: 859, 1138, 1159, 859).

13 Cieza de León (1984 [1553]: chap. 50: 226); Garcilaso de la Vega (1995 [1609]: book 6, chaps. 30–31: 393–395), based on that: Calancha (1976 [1638]: vol. 3, chap. 19: 925); Albornoz (1989 [end of 16th century]: 191); cf. also Eeckhout (1998); Taylor (1980: chap. 5: 43–45, 234f.).

14 The following information is based on different sources like dictionaries, ethnological articles, oral traditions, and direct reports recorded during my own fieldwork in 2006.

15 Chirinos Rivera y Maque Capira (1996: 198–203); de Lucca (1983: 376, 547); La Riva (2003: 19).

16 Rosat Pontacti (2004: 66); de Lucca (1983: 217); Uhle (1968: 53–59).

17 Arnold and Yapita Moya (1992: 13); Schramm (1988: 174); van Kessel (1994: 233); Urton (1985: 260).

18 Chirinos Rivera y Maque Capira (1996: 194); Morote Best (1988: 87); Urton (1985: 260); van Kessel (1994: 234).

19 Pers. comm., 04.08.2006, Juan Condori Quispe [change of name], 23, Chipaya speaker.

20 Pers. comm., 18.08.2006, José Condori Quispe [change of name], brother of Juan, 45, Chipaya speaker.

21 Chirinos Rivera y Maque Capira (1996: 198); cf. also Lausent (1984); Morgante (2001).

22 Pers. comm., 19.07.2006, Williams Ccori Valdivia, 26, from Puno City, Peru, student, Quechua speaker; cf. also data from van Kessel (1994: 233).

23 Pers. comm., 27.07.2006, Beatriz Chayña Choque, 48, from Paucarcolla, Puno Province, Puno Department, Peru, farmer, Quechua speaker. Pers. comm., 04.08.2006, Fabián Mendoza Pérez, 50, farmer in Paucarcolla.

24 Itier (1997: 312); equally van Kessel (1994: 235); not Chirinos Rivera y Maque Capira (1996: 114–116).

25 Pers. comm., 03.08.2006, Alfredo Ramírez Apaza, 30, from Ilave, El Collao Province, Puno Department, Peru, cook, Aymara speaker.

26 Pers. comm., 19.07.2006, Williams Ccori Valdivia.

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2.4 The Fox *cuentos*

2.4.1 The Fox and the Condor[27]

1. *Huq p'unchay zorrowan, hm, condorwansis*[28] *tupaykunku orqo patapi.*
2. *Hinaspataq zorroqa niq, e, nichu condorqa, zorro niq kasqa condorta: "Compadrito, kanqa matrimonio cielopi".*
3. *Hina niq kasqa zorroqa: "Ay, noqaqnipunin atisaqchu riyta, riy qanqa, wicharinki imaynapis, ah", nispa niq kasqa.*
4. *Hinaspataq zorroqa favortas mañakun condorta: "Manachus qhepiriwankiman?"*
5. *"Manachu hinan, qanqa sinchi travieso kanki, nispa ninkuqa", nispa niq kasqa.*
6. *Hinaspataq zorroqa niq kasqa: "Manapunin ima, imatapis ruwasaqchu! ...*[29] *tiyaykusaq", nispa niq kasqa condorta.*
7. *Hinaqa condorqa qh'epiqpunin kasqa.*
8. *Hinataqa zorrotaq, hinaqa ña chay chayachiña, hinas ultimotaq taqllikuyta qallarin, platokuna llaqwayta qallarin, chay kasaraku waqpiqa.*
9. *Hinaspataq tuwaq condorqa pashaqtapis ...*[30] *coleraku ...*[31] *na sacar ...*[32] *paripun ...*[33] *no. ...*[34]
10. *Hinaspataq zorroqa: "Imaynata[q]?"*

11. *Manam atinchu mayninta uraqapuy, uraqapuyta atinchu, no.*
12. *Hina diosninchis hinaq kasqa, eh, chimpaq kasqa chamanqa.*
13. *Hinaspataq zorromanqa qoq kasqa huq, huq iskay ichhullata.*
14. *Eh, hinaspataq "chay ichhutaq simpaykuy, kayta uraqanaykipaq" niq kasqa.*

15. *Simpakuq kasqa.*
16. *Hinaqa chawpikama chay ichhuqa ichhu simpasqa kuti hinaykamun, taripaykamun.*

17. *Hinaspataq, hmm, "uraqapi kunanqa" nispas wataykun, na.*

1. One day the fox and the condor met on the top of a mountain.
2. And then the fox ...,[35] the fox said to the condor: "*Compadrito*, there will be a wedding in heaven."

3. And the fox said like this: "Oh, I will surely [not] be able to go [there]. You, go! You will come up somehow," he said.
4. And then the fox asked the condor a favour: "Wouldn't you carry me on your shoulder?"
5. "[It is] not [possible] like [this], since you are said to be very crazy," said [the condor].
6. And then the fox said: "I will certainly not do ...[36] anything! I will sit down," he said to the condor.
7. And so the condor carried him on his shoulder.
8. And then, when the fox had just been brought there, so ...[37] he began to shake himself and to lick the plates ...[38]
9. And then ...[39] the condor left [the fox], [because] he was too angry.
10. And then the fox [said]: "How [will I get back to earth]?"
11. He could not, nowhere ...[40] he could make his way down.
12. So, our god was so, eh, [and] a shaman[41] was approaching.
13. And then he gave the fox one, one two straw[s].

14. Eh, and then he said: "Weave carefully this straw [to a rope], to make thereby your way down," he said.
15. [The fox] wove [the straw].
16. So this straw, [this] straw was woven until the middle [of the rope] ...[42] [then] it became so, [and he] reached [the end of the rope].
17. And then, hmm, saying "now [I have reached] the bottom [= the end of the rope]," he tied it up ...[43]

27 Yolanda Cahui Oha, 20, from Llachón, Puno Province, Puno Department, Peru, cook, Quechua speaker. *Cuento* recorded 25.07.2006. Translation from Quechua: Matthias Pache.
28 According to the pronunciation of this word on the recording, the Spanish spelling "condor" was used here.
29 Inaudible.
30 Inaudible.
31 Inaudible.
32 Inaudible.
33 Inaudible.
34 Inaudible.
35 The words *zorroqa niq, e, nichu condorqa* are not translated.
36 The word *ima* is not translated.
37 The word *ultimotaq* is not translated.
38 The words *chay kasaraku waqpiqa* are not translated.
39 The word *tuwaq* is not translated.
40 The word *uraqapuy* is not translated.
41 This is quite noticeable, since shamanism does not exist in the indigenous cultures of the central Andes (Langdon and Baer 1992; Rösing 1990).
42 The word *kuti* is not translated.
43 The word *na* is not translated. "Recurso oral que se emplea ... cuando no acude prontamente a la memoria el término o la expresión exacta que se requiere" (Rosat Pontacti 2004: 635 f.).

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18. *Hinaspa uraqapushan, chawpikamalla chay taripamun ...*
19. *Hinas huq luruqa pasaykun, loroqa chaypis purikushan, urakamushan.*
20. *Hinaqa, hinaqa lorota niq kasqa: "Ay loro, qam kanki na, eh, qullu hina, qullu senqa kanki", niq kasqa.*
21. *Hinaqa loroqa molestakunsi.*
22. *Hinaq huqtas loroqa muruyaramun chawpiman-ta ...*
23. *Hinaspataq muruyaramun.*
24. *Hinaspataqsis, hinan, eh, zorroqa ultimu hina "iman chayqa?"*
25. *Qhellquykukun, urmaykun.*
26. *Hinaspa wañurqun zorroqa, no.*

18. Then he was going down, [but] this [fox] only reached the middle [of the rope].
19. So a parrot passed, a parrot was flying around there, [and the fox] was going down.
20. And so, and so he said to the parrot: "Oh, parrot, you are ...[45] you are a hook nose!" he said.
21. And so the parrot got angry.
22. And so the parrot quickly cut [the rope] in the middle.
23. And then suddenly the parrot cut [the rope].
24. So, so, eh, at last the fox [said something] like: "What is that?"
25. He turned round [and] fell on the ground.
26. So the fox died quickly ...[46]

2.4.2 The Fox and the Birds[44]

1. *Layra tiempo utjana, utjana mä atuq antunyu.*
2. *Jupa sataynawa mallkuru, y ukatsti atuq antunyu sataynawa mallkuru:*
3. *"Mallku wawñall mäta jiwarshixa.*
4. *Mallku manq'a churita, manq' churita."*
5. *Mallkusti sataynawa: "Ya."*
6. *"Jumat jiwat jaquqipanta,*
7. *mayastí, jawsañ taqi jamach'iru, jamach'inakaru."*
8. *Ukatsti atuq antunyusti jaqukipatayna jiwata.*
9. *Ukata ukatsti jutataynawa.*
10. *Mallku sataynawa: "Inamach'i wañamach'i, aka atuq antunyu jiwatawa, jutapxam manq'añani, taqpach jutapxam!"*
11. *Ukatsti inamach'i wañamach'i jutapxatayna.*
12. *Mä yuspaqui, mä yuspaki sayt'atayna.*
13. *Ukatsti jamach'inakax taqpacha jiwaratayna, tapqach dismayasitayna.*
14. *Ukat mallkusti isti jutiwa.*
15. *Taqpacha, taqpacha mä sakuru winantatayna, ukansti uka sakunsti taqpacha jamach'inakaru uchapxatayna.*
16. *Ukatsti, uka antunyusti, uka tiwulasti sarataynawa.*
17. *Uka mä sakuna, sarataynawa,*
18. *Uka y juparu puritaynawa yaq'a, jupa antunyu yaq'añ munatayna.*

1. In old times there was a fox.
2. He said to the condor, and then, the fox said to the condor:
3. "Condor, my children die of starvation!
4. Condor, give me to eat, give me to eat!"
5. And the Condor said: "Yes."
6. You will fall [as if you were] dead.
7. The other in turn call[s] all the birds, the birds.
8. And then the fox fell [as if he were] dead.
9. Then, so they [= the birds] came.
10. The condor said: "Birds from the sea, birds from the mountains, this fox is dead! Come, let's eat him, come all!"
11. And then the birds came ...[47]
12. One [= the fox] suddenly, one suddenly stood up.
13. Then the birds all died, they all fell in a faint.
14. Then the condor came.
15. They filled them all, all in a bag, and then in this bag they put all the birds.
16. Then, this fox, this fox went [off],
17. that, [with the birds] in a bag he went.
18. That, and urine came to him, this fox wanted to urinate.

44 Rodolfo Quispe Mendoza (change of name), 30, from Oruro City, Bolivia. Student, Aymara speaker. Date of record 10.09.2006. Translation from Aymara: Rodolfo Quispe Mendoza. – The storyteller speaks Spanish in everyday life and does not seem to master Aymara very well. However, this text might give some insights into phenomena of language decline in Aymara.

45 The words *na, qullu hina* are not translated.
46 The word *no* is not translated.
47 The word *wañamach'i* is not translated.

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19. *Antunyusti thaqhataynawa mä lugara yaq'arañataki,*
20. *y mä qanqatu tuwataynawa.*
21. *Uka qanqatutaru sataynawa: "Kullaka ... q'ipill jaytasiñ, nä yaq'arasiñ sarañ munta".*
22. *Uka patusti "iyaw" sataynawa.*
23. *Y ukatsti uka, uka qanqatusti injayataynawa, injañ munataynawa.*
24. *Taqpach uka jamach'inaka taqpacha jalanatayna, taqpacha sarapxatayna.*
25. *Y uka qanqatusti sataynawa: "Jichax kuns lurañ?*
26. *Uka kullakalla tiwulalla jutaniwa, mayir jutani!"*
27. *Ukatsti uka qanqatusti wichhunaka, uka añawayanaka, wakhakaranaka uk winantatayna.*
28. *Uk, winantasansti uk chinuntatayna.*
29. *Ukham suyt'atayna.*
30. *Ukama tiwulasti jutataynawa.*
31. *Sataynawa uka qanqaturu: "Walik kullaka, jichhax nä sarxañ".*
32. *Ukham q'ipitaynawa mä uka sakuru.*
33. *Ukatsti uka tiwulasti sataynawa: "Ay jamach'inaka! Jani chhululmanti chhult'istati, ay jamach'inaka!"*
34. *Ukham sarataynawa.*
35. *Ukatsti jupax sarataynawa uka wawanakaparu.*
36. *Ukham inkharpatayna uka sakuru, uka mäñataki.*
37. *Ukatsti uka wawanakpasti manq'at jiwarataynawa.*
38. *Uka tiwulasti anturpxataynawa, ukan instanti wakhakharanaka, whichhunaka, y wawanakasti mäta jiwarata.*
39. *Ukatsti uka tiwulasti sataynawa: "Aka kullakalla manq'añ sarañ!"*
40. *Ukham rawiytata sariw uka qutaparu.*
41. *Ukatsti jak'achasinsti sataynawa uka qanqaturu: "Kullakalla, kunam ukham lurastati?*
42. *Kunat wichhunak churastati?*
43. *Kunam nä jichhax manq'antayam!"*
44. *Ukatsti uka tiwulasti umantataynawa taqpacha, umantataynawa uka uma.*
45. *Ukatsti uka qanqatusti lijuru t'ijsi.*
46. *Ukatsti tiwulasti jach'a phatankani umat sarnaqataynawa.*
47. *Uka jupasti sataynawa: "Ay añawaya! Ay wichhunaka! Jani chhultitantati!*
48. *Chultitasma nä jiwarañ!"*
49. *Ukatsti jak'achataynawa mä wichhuru, uka wichuru.*
50. *T'aqataynawa.*
51. *Uka tiwulasti taqpacha phallataynawa.*

19. The fox looked for a place in order to urinate,
20. and a duck swam [there].
21. [The fox] said to this duck: "Sister, [I] deposite a little burden [next to you], I want to go urinate.
22. This duck said: "Yes."
23. And then this, this duck looked [in the bag], it wanted to look.
24. All these birds, all flew [away], they all went [away].
25. And this duck said [to herself]: "Now what [will I] do?
26. This little sister little fox will come, she will come to demand [the bag]."
27. Then this duck filled this [bag] with straw, thorns, [and] llama excrements.
28. And filling this [bag], [the duck] tied it up.
29. So she waited.
30. And so the fox came.
31. He said to the duck: "Well, sister, now [I] go."
32. So he shouldered one, this bag.
33. And then this fox went [and said:] "Oh, birds, don't prick me with your beak, oh birds!"
34. So he went.
35. Then he went to his children.
36. So he gave them this bag, in order to eat these [birds].
37. And then these, his children died from starving.
38. This fox tipped it out, [and] there appeared the [llama] excrements and the straw and the children starved to death.
39. Then this fox said [to himself]: "[I will] go to eat this little sister!"
40. Thus enraged he went to her lake.
41. And then when he was approaching [the lake] he said to this duck: "Little sister, why have you done this to me?
42. Why have you given straw to me?
43. Now [I will] eat [you]."
44. Then this fox drank all, he drank this water [of the lake, in order to reach the duck].
45. Then this duck escaped far away.
46. Then the fox went around with a big belly [full] of water.
47. This, he said: "Oh thorns, oh straw, don't prick me!
48. If you prick me, I [will] die!"
49. Then he approached one straw, this straw.
50. He burst.
51. This fox all exploded.

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52. *Ukat taqi kun insti, taqi mänaka, ch'uqinaka, ch'uñunaka, ukanaka ukham insti, ukham ukakiw.*
53. *Uka layra kuñtux.*

52. From then all appeared all food, potatos, *chuñu* these thus appeared ...[49]

53. This [was the] old cuento.

2.4.3 The Fox and the Woman[48]

1. *Eh, tuki timpu źelatkićha tsha źona, tsha źon qiti.*
2. *Tsha źon, lukchiś źon, watsatkićha.*
3. *Nä źona luku oqhchitakićha.*
4. *Nä źon, nä źonakś tshi qiti thonśikićha.*
5. *Thonźku qiti näkiś pekuñchikićha.*
6. *Piramira achśkiśtan qallantichikićha: "Ćhhul thüchiś ï?" khikan.*
7. *"Ayaź", khićhan nä źon.*
8. *"Ćhhul thüchiś ïst?" khićhan.*
9. *"Źhukiź".*
10. *"Tïsti?"*
11. *"Piśh".*
12. *"Tïst?"*
13. *Nuź nizta pekuñchikićha.*
14. *Xalla nuź pekunźku nä źonakś: "Tï ćhhul thüchiśt?" khichikićha.*
15. *Hm, "Ephź źaqaź tik," khichikićha, khichinkiź nä źonki.*
16. *"Ah, werh śimźnasaź?" khichikiź qitiki.*
17. *Nä źonki "yä" khichinkićha.*
18. *Xalla nuź yä khiźku ninakaki iźassikićha.*
19. *Ni źaqa ni horaki näźa pichitakiś niki.*
20. *Xalla neqhśtan nuź iźasan ninaka, hm, näźa luku thonatkićha.*
21. *Na źon neqhśtan, ni qitik anawira qhxiśqi xöśñi atatkićha.*
22. *Hm, ana qhxiśqi xöśñi atźku, na źonki "qhaźkes?" khikan hasta ni kuchillźtan qhxiśqi murźinchinkićha.*
23. *Xalla nuź murźinźku nuźkiś qitiki oqhchikićha.*
24. *Nuź oqhźku na źonki ni qhxiśqi xöśinkićha.*
25. *Xöźku qitiki, eh, źluku irantiźkichikićha, na źona luku.*
26. *"Ni qiti ćhhulut thewź?"*

1. In old times there was a woman, a woman and a fox.
2. A woman [who] had a husband and was weaving.
3. The husband [of] this woman had gone.
4. This woman, a fox visited this woman.
5. Visiting her, the fox asked her [questions].
6. First of all, he began with the head, saying: "What's the name of that?"
7. "[That's] the forehead."
8. "What's the name of that?"
9. "[That's] the eye."
10. "And that?"
11. "The breast."
12. "And that?"
13. In this way he asked [questions].
14. Asking the woman that way, he said: "What's the name of that?"
15. "It's the lunch of [my] husband," said the woman.
16. The fox said: "Oh, can I have lunch?"
17. That woman said: "Yes."
18. And thus, having said "yes," they slept with each other.
19. At this moment, the lunch was her vagina.
20. Then, when they were sleeping with each other, her husband came back.
21. Then this woman, the fox could not at all get his penis out.
22. As he could not get out his penis, the woman, saying: "What can I do?" cut his penis off with a knife.
23. Then, after cutting the fox went off.
24. And going thus, the woman took out the penis.
25. Taking [the penis] out, the fox, the husband arrived, the husband of the woman.
26. "The fox, what is he waiting for?" [her husband asked].

48 Juan Condori Quispe (change of name), 23, from Chipaya, Atahuallpa Province, Oruro Department, Bolivia. Chipaya speaker. Date of record: 04.09.2006. – The cuento has been recorded in the context of the project "Documentation and Description of the Chipaya Language as Spoken Today," financed by the Volkswagen Foundation and directed by Dr. Sabine Dedenbach-Salazar Sáenz. Translation from Chipaya: Juan Condori Quispe.

49 The words *ukham ukakiw* are not translated.

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27. *"Ni qiti üśhaź qhurź ni qitik," khichinkiź na źonki.*
28. *Xalla nuź ni qitiki neqhś qhuykeźuqaś oqhlaykićha.*
29. *Nuźkiś na źon ni qhxiśqi xöź ni qitźkin thxotañchinkićha.*
31. *Ni qitiki, qitźkin, nuźkiś qitiki qhxiśqi chhichhś oqhchikićha.*
32. *Ni naź, na źonki watsatkićha watsi.*
33. *Xalla na źon ni qawñi onanchinkićha qitźkiś.*
34. *Ni qawñiźtan qitiki qhxiśqi jerañchi oqhlayatkićha.*
35. *Ni lhxaspiźtan ni qhxiśqi sphxoqchi.*
36. *Nuźkiś qhaś puju watś źelatkićha.*
37. *Xalla ni puju qitiki watśpantakićha.*
38. *Xalla nuź watan qitź qhxiśqi, xalla nuź watan qitź qhxiśqi thxotsikićha qhaśkiś ni lhxaspa jiñźku.*
39. *Xalla neqhś qitiki ana qhxiśqichś kirchikićha.*
40. *Nuź wiriñ tsha źon, üśha ichin źon, ni puj atkiś pïźtalla.*

41. *Ch'akhallaźtaqś wathchinkićha lhxawchilla.*

42. *Xalla ni ch'akhalla ni chichhchinkićha qhuya ćhheri qissapa qhaqñi khikan.*
43. *Xalla nuź chhichhśku ni, ni ch'akha ch'eqatkićha khakśi.*
44. *Xalla näź ch'eqan ni, ni, ni hora ni ch'akhallaki qhxiśqi qitź qhxiśqitakiź niki.*

45. *Nuź ch'eqan näźa liskiś luśśhikićha.*

46. *Ćhherhsikićha tsukchinkiź naki.*
47. *Nuź tsukź naki, pukultan turtaqchiśtakićha.*
48. *"Na mam, mama qhaźkhis, qhaźkhissamta ćhhulut ana wali?" khićhan näźa turtaqa.*
49. *Mäki "t'iwji t'iwjilla" nuźqaś khintakićha.*
50. *Ta mä t'iwji t'iwjillaqalkhiź.*
51. *"Ćhhulut niźta nï?" khiñitakiź turtaqaki.*
52. *Xalla nuź wën thxaxan, näźa matakin luśśhikićha.*
53. *Nuźkiś näźa matakś ćhherhsitakiźniki.*
54. *Źmatki niźta t'iwji t'iwjillaśaqś khintakićha.*
55. *Xalla niźtaqśtakiź niki.*
56. *Xalla nuź neqhśtan ni xöź thxotchikiź ninakaki.*

57. *Qhillapatkin thxotźkichikićha.*

27. The woman said: "The fox is looking after sheep, the fox."
28. So the fox was going around near the house.

29. Then the woman, taking out the penis she threw it to the fox.
31. The fox, then, the fox, taking [his] penis, went off.
32. …[50] The woman was weaving a textile.
33. This woman gave the fox a thread.
34. With this thread, the fox was going around, having tied up his penis.
35. [The fox] massed the penis with clay.
36. Then he had to cross a river.
37. He had to pass this river.
38. Crossing [the river] the fox' penis, then, crossing, the fox' penis fell in the water, because the clay had dissolved.
39. Then the fox remained without penis.
40. So, then one woman, [there was a] woman herding sheep, at the bank of the river having landed [the fox' penis].
41. [The woman] found it thinking it was a greasy little bone.
42. She took this little bone to [her] house in order to cook, saying that it would season.
43. Thus having taken this, this bone, she was grinding it [with a stone], with her legs apart.
44. When she was grinding it, at this, this, this moment the little bone was the penis, it was the fox' penis.
45. When she was grinding it, it entered between her legs.
46. She was petrified and frightened.
47. Thus shocked, she had two daughters.
48. "Mo, Mother, what, what happened to you, why aren't you well?" her daughters said.
49. The mother said only: "T'iwji, t'iwjilla."[51]
50. This mother only said: "T'iwji, t'iwjilla."
51. "What is that?" said the daughters.
52. Thus, when they were sleeping at night [the penis] entered her daughter.
53. Then her daughter was petrified.
54. Her daughter also said: "T'iwji, t'iwjilla."
55. Thus, so was this [penis].
56. And then, taking out [the penis] they threw it away.
57. They threw [the penis] on [the] ash heap.[52]

50 The words *ni naź* are not translated.

51 Aymara word, signifies "dancer" in accordance with José Condori Quispe.

52 Since there is quite no firewood in the Altiplano, llama excrements are used as a substitute. The ashes that are left are kept near the house (pers. comm. 06.09.2006, Juan Condori Quispe).

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58. *Thxottikśtan ni qiti ana iya thonchikićha.*
59. *Ni qhxiśqi nuźkiś qachchikiź niki.*
60. *Nïkamaqś ti kintu.*
61. *Sparakź.*

58. After throwing [the penis] away, the fox didn't come back.
59. Then this penis got lost.
60. Up to here is the cuento.
61. Thank you.

2.5 Interpretation of the Role of the Fox

First of all, when comparing the fox, as he appears in the three *cuentos* presented above, with tricksters' typical features and characteristics (cf. chap. 1.1), there can be no doubt that the fox in the Andean oral traditions has to be considered as a trickster.

As to the different interpretations of the trickster's role proposed by different authors (cf. chap. 1.2), there are also certain accordances.

Within his failing attempt to fly and to transgress cosmic levels, the fox appears as a caricature of a shaman (*cuento* 1).[53] Exploding and at the same time providing humans with potato and *chuñu* (freeze-dried potato), he is at the same time a fool and a culture hero (*cuento* 2).[54] Furthermore, the ambiguous, clever, and at the same time stupid fox more or less successfully transcends several different categorical and spatial boundaries – although not in a mediating role[55] – (*cuentos* 1, 2, 3; cf. Lévi-Strauss 1958) and violates taboos and social norms (*cuentos* 1, 3; cf. Babcock-Abrahams 1975; Makarius 1993). He personifies a lack of impulse control (*cuentos* 1, 3; cf. Jung 1954; Radin 1954) and appears as a marginal figure, when he hangs between heaven and earth or when he prowls around the woman's house (*cuentos* 1, 3).[56]

The different interpretations of the trickster proposed by the authors cited above are hence applicable to the fox in the oral traditions of the southern Central Andes. But an important problem emerges: the particular interpretations do not apply to all of the three fox tales. If the trickster-fox is only interpreted as a boundary-crosser, as which he appears in all three *cuentos*, there would be the following unresolvable difficulty: one would have to show that the spatial and categorical transgressions described in the tales are comparable to each other. For this reason, an alternative and broader interpretation of the trickster-fox is proposed.[57]

The fox, always dissatisfied with the status quo, is said to generate all sorts of social conflicts. His transgressions of limits, his ambiguous character, his marginal status, his taboo-violating behavior, his lack of impulse control, his culture-heroic deeds, and failing shamanic flights are only facets that reflect the social conflictive character of the fox.

In *cuento* 1 the fox lies to the condor, misbehaves when he is in heaven and thus breaks the promise he made to the condor. The latter, thereby enraged, leaves the fox alone in heaven. The fox insults the parrot, whereupon the latter also gets angry, cuts the cord, and so kills the fox.

In *cuento* 2 the birds are deceived by the fox who wants to kill them. In the next episode of this *cuento*, the duck, fearing that the fox deceives her, in turn and thereby, causes the death of the little foxes. The fox vows vengeance and threatens the duck to kill her. In the last episode of the tale, the straw, although begged not to do this, pricks the fox whereupon he explodes.

In *cuento* 3 a woman cheats on her husband with the fox, then mutilates/castrates the latter and lies to her husband. A herdswoman tries to grind the fox' penis and the latter in turn violates the herdswoman and her daughter.

To sum up, the fox can be interpreted as a protagonist whose role consists in (directly or indirectly) creating a whole range of conflictive situations: insults, lies, threats, deception, mutilation, murder, and violation.

2.6 Interpretation of the Fox' Function

2.6.1 A Cognitive Perspective

When, in a further step, asking for the reason of this role as a highly conflictive protagonist, another important point has to be considered: the *cuentos'* performance itself. The tales of the Quechua-speaking population in the southern Central Andes are con-

53 Cf. footnote 41; cf. Ricketts (1966, 1993).
54 Cf. Boas (1969 [1898]); Brinton (1969 [1876]); Makarius (1993).
55 Cf. the Chipaya cuento, cited by Cerrón-Palomino (2006: 285–291) concerning the fox in the role of a (failing) mediator.
56 Cf. Babcock-Abrahams (1975). Another Andean trickster figure, the Ukumari, or Juan Oso, or Juan del Oso (Taylor 1997: 348–352; Urton 1985: 270–272; Weber Ch. 1987), would fit much better than the fox in Babcock-Abrahams' interpretation of the trickster as a marginal figure.
57 The already existing interpretations of the trickster presented in this article and the interpretation that is proposed in the following paragraph are not mutually exclusive.

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versational and dialogical (Mannheim 1999: 49). The performance of a tale requires an active participation of the listener in form of verbal or nonverbal assent, repetition of the last phrase, or interruptions in between in order to ask questions or to add details (Mannheim and van Vleet 1998: 327; cf. also Fourtané 1997: 119).

Questions are also asked if the listener already knows the *cuento*. How many questions are asked, or if any at all, this strongly depends on the person. But even in case a person does not ask questions relating to the content of a *cuento* when listening to it, there is always a certain active participation of the listener. There are different reactions and comments of the listener, like "yes," "oh," or "and then?"[58] Telling a *cuento* can, therefore, be understood as conversational and dialogical, and, in a broader sense, as a harmonious social interaction.

In the context of an explanation of the worldwide spreading of religious concepts, the cognitive anthropologist Pascal Boyer (1994, 1996) has proposed the following theory: Modestly counterintuitive representations that violate intuitive knowledge about certain ontological categories (as e.g., supernatural beings that are not subject to physical or biological laws) are attention-demanding and, therefore, significantly easier to recall than banal or completely bizarre concepts. This recall advantage of counterintuitive representations favors their cultural transmission. The violation of intuitive knowledge can occur by two means: on the one hand, through so-called breaches of general native expectations (e.g., a living entity being able to pass solid objects), on the other hand, through the transfer of properties from one ontological category to another (e.g., a nonliving object, like a rock, that is able to reproduce like a living being) (cf. also Barrett 2008: 322–324, 335 f.).

Some empirical research confirms Boyer's theory.[59] Up to now the cognitive advantage of counterintuitive contents in stories has only been tested concerning objects or persons with more or less counterintuitive features.[60] Moreover, only few researchers investigating the recall advantages of counterintuitive concepts (e.g., Gonce et al. 2006; Upala et al. 2007) have considered the variable "context" and if so, it has only been taken into account in a special sense. It was shown that previous expectation of intuitive or counterintuitive content or post hoc explanation of these contents strongly influenced their recall.

If the results of research presented in the last two paragraphs are put together – on the one hand, the recall advantage of slightly counterintuitive contents of stories, on the other hand, the fact that performance of oral traditions can be understood as a harmonic social interaction – the following can be deduced: in the harmonious context of oral traditions an antisocial, conflictive protagonists is attention-demanding and, in a certain way, counterintuitive. The oral performance of tales as a harmonious social interaction thus contributes to a greater salience (and thereby better recall and easier cultural transmission) of conflictive contents.

Results of current research in cognitive anthropology hence gives a plausible explanation of the conflictive character of the fox in Andean *cuentos*, but also of the conflictive character of tricksters in general, or, from an even broader perspective, it explains the rather conflictive and brutal content of oral traditions in general like, for example, fairy tales (Grimm and Grimm 1937). Cognitive anthropology would also account for the fact that trickster is above all a protagonist of oral traditions and only in a lesser degree of written literature (Hynes 1993a: 203 f.; cf. also Reesman 2001).

To sum up, the fact that conflictive contents are preferred within oral traditions is certainly based on their greater salience. But there is no reason to restrict possible reasons for this only to human cognitive architecture and its limited capacities which bring humans to concentrate on counterintuitive, attention-demanding contents. Another limitation that brings people to prefer salient, counterintuitive contents over banal contents is to be considered as well: the limitedness of the material on which cultural representations are made. To every representation made, there are both spatial (ceramics, paper, textiles) and temporal restrictions (time to tell stories). Together with the limitedness of human cognition, the limitedness of material might thus be another reason for the relative overrepresentation of counterintuitive concepts in tales, newspapers, cinema, etc.

2.6.2 A Social Perspective

When, in a further step, going beyond the cognitive perspective in order to determine a social function of the trickster, the following – admittedly rather speculative – explanation seems appropriate: On the one hand, it is plausible that there is a certain identi-

58 Pers. comm., 05.09.2006, Juan Condori Quispe. Similar phenomena have been attested for oral traditions in other Native American cultures (cf. Burns 1980; Jacobs 1959).

59 Barrett and Nyhof (2001); Boyer and Ramble (2001); Upala et al. (2007).

60 Barrett 2008); Barrett and Nyhof (2001); Boyer and Ramble (2001); Gonce et al. (2006); Upala et al. (2007).

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fication of storyteller and listener with the trickster, the drives of the fox being very human (e.g., hunger, sexuality, fear of injure). On the other hand, at the same time, the protagonists' mode of interaction sharply contrasts with the mode of interaction of storyteller and listener. This might suggest the latter in a subliminal way that they are in fact not at all like the fox, i.e., dissatisfied and antisocial.

Telling fox (or trickster) stories would thus inter alia have the function to suggest man's satisfaction with the status quo and induce him to socially desirable behavior. The simultaneously occurring suggestion that storyteller and listener are not as stupid as the trickster might still increase the acceptance of a suggested satisfaction with the status quo and account for the trickster's silly character. The stupidity of the fox as a means of increasing the acceptance of the suggested satisfaction would explain, in the case of the central Andean cultures, why the fox as a protagonist of oral traditions appears as rather stupid, while as a wild animal and cattle thief he is mainly associated with cleverness and skill (cf. chap. 2.3).

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